



In the Claims (clean copy as amended)

sub C₁ → 1. (Twice Amended) A method for converting benzene and other aromatic hydrocarbons to C7 and C8 aromatic hydrocarbons, which method comprises contacting a starting material comprising aromatic hydrocarbons, wherein said aromatic hydrocarbons comprise benzene and other aromatic hydrocarbons, and a non-aromatic compound content of 1 % by weight or less, with a catalyst containing mordenite and between about 0.01 to 5% rhenium to perform at least one reaction selected from the group consisting of transalkylation, dealkylation and disproportionation, thereby diminishing benzene content and converting said starting material into C7 or C8 aromatic hydrocarbons; wherein hydrogen is present in said reaction.

bx 2. (Twice Amended) A method for converting benzene and other aromatic hydrocarbons to C7 and C8 aromatic hydrocarbons, which method comprises the steps of:
first removing non-aromatics from said crude aromatic hydrocarbon material thereby reducing the non-aromatic compound content of said material to 1 % by weight or less, contacting the reduced non-aromatic content starting material with a catalyst in the presence of hydrogen to perform at least one reaction selected from the group consisting of transalkylation, dealkylation, and disproportionation, to diminish benzene content and produce C7 or C8 aromatic hydrocarbons.

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10. (Twice Amended) A method for producing C7 and C8 aromatic hydrocarbons, which comprises mixing a fraction obtained through gasoline fractionation comprising benzene, with an aromatic hydrocarbon material that contains C9+ aromatic hydrocarbons to create a mixture having a non-aromatic compound content greater than 1% by weight, reducing said non-aromatic compound content of said mixture to 1 % by weight or less, then reacting the mixture with a catalyst containing mordenite and between 0.01 to 5% rhenium to thereby diminish benzene content and convert the aromatic hydrocarbons therein, and separating the resulting C7 and C8 aromatic hydrocarbons from the reaction mixture.

Please cancel Claim 9 without prejudice and without disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.